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FACT SHEET

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Improving Trial Court Facilities: Fiscal Year 2007–2008 Funding Requests

Tulare—New Porterville Courthouse

Calaveras—New San Andreas Courthouse
Lassen—New Susanville Courthouse
Los Angeles—New Long Beach Courthouse
Madera—New Madera Courthouse
Riverside—New Riverside Mid-County Region Courthouse
San Benito—New Hollister Courthouse
San Bernardino—New San Bernardino Courthouse
San Joaquin—New Stockton Courthouse

In April 2007 the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital Outlay Plan that includes 175 new construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9.8 billion (January 2007 dollars). In August 2006 the Judicial Council directed staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to submit, as part of the fiscal year 2007–2008 budget process, funding requests for nine new trial court facilities. The initial funding request for these nine urgently needed projects is \$31.2 million in 2007–2008 with total project costs estimated to be \$1.2 billion, which would be funded by State Court Facilities Construction Funds. If approved, these projects mark important progress toward implementing needed projects for courts across California. As noted below, the judicial branch will additionally pursue alternative revenue sources over the next several years to support the full implementation of the statewide capital plan.

New Porterville Courthouse

A new Porterville courthouse is proposed for initial funding of \$4.4 million for fiscal year 2007–2008. The new facility will house nine courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this 90,000-gross-square-foot courthouse is \$91.2 million (escalated to construction mid-point estimated as summer of 2011). A site for the new courthouse has not been selected. This project—ranked in the Immediate Need priority group of the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan—is one of the highest priority capital outlay projects for the judicial branch.

No Security, Severe Overcrowding, Poor Physical Conditions, and Reduced Access to Court Services

The Superior Court of California, County of Tulare serves the south county communities out of two inadequate court facilities—one in Porterville and one in Tulare. These facilities are functionally deficient, overcrowded, and among the worst in

the state in terms of security and physical conditions. Operating two separate court facilities in the south county area is relatively inefficient. Due to their condition, the existing facilities will remain incapable of meeting the region's current demand for court services due to the recent and projected high population growth in the County. The deplorable conditions of the existing facilities and the public's hindered access to court services are among the reasons why the proposed new Porterville courthouse is urgently needed.



The Porterville courthouse is overcrowded. Its two courtrooms seat 72 (including attorneys and court staff), but often cannot accommodate all parties. Consequently, the public, victims, witnesses, and on-bail defendants must wait in narrow hallways.

Local Government Collaboration on Project

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors and the City of Porterville adopted resolutions in October in support of the need to replace the existing Porterville courthouse with a new facility in Porterville and pledged to work with the state to develop the project. The AOC will work collaboratively with the county and city to select a site for the new facility and develop a project that meets the goals of the local community.

Long-term Funding Needs

The California judicial branch is exploring additional, alternative means to fund the state's sizable need for courthouse infrastructure improvements. Options include pursuing bond funding—consideration will be given to both revenue and general obligation bonds. Another potential consideration involves increasing criminal

penalties and other filing fees to be contributed to the State Court Facilities Construction Fund for the sole purpose of funding court construction projects. While these initiatives evolve, the Judicial Council will pursue annual funding requests to begin to address the most critical deficiencies in the state's courthouses.

More Information

A project feasibility report for the New Porterville courthouse, dated September 8, 2006, was prepared by AOC staff to document the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing court facilities in Tulare County, explore options for how best to meet the need for improved facilities, and estimate the cost to construct a new facility. This document can be downloaded from

http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final_tulare_pfr_06_09_06.pdf.

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